

In the Claims

1. (Currently amended) An apparatus for allowing a seller of items to gather data from e-commerce websites ~~in order to optimize the sale of similar items~~, comprising:

~~a.~~ a website server computer connected to the Internet, and

~~b. including~~ a database ~~on the website server computer~~ for storing data about previous sales of said items ~~that have previously been sold on various one or more of the~~ e-commerce websites, and

~~e b.~~ database management software for maintaining said database,

c. data gathering software that visits the e-commerce websites to compile said data about said previous sales, and

d. application software for allowing a user to request ~~information~~ from the database said data about said previous sales ~~previous sales on e-commerce websites of items similar to the one that the seller has for sale.~~

2. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, ~~further including wherein~~ said data gathering software comprises agent software that, at regular intervals, searches said various e-commerce websites to obtain said data ~~on~~ about said previous sales ~~about various items.~~

3. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, ~~further including wherein~~ said data gathering software comprises agent software that, at times determined by a seller, searches said various e-commerce websites to obtain said data about said previous

sales of various items.

4. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further including ~~TCP/IP~~ network connection software ~~for enabling~~ to enable the application software to communicate over the Internet with a seller at a remote computer.

5. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 2, further including ~~TCP/IP~~ network connection software ~~for enabling~~ to enable the agent software to communicate over the Internet with an e-commerce website.

6. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 3, further including ~~TCP/IP~~ network connection software ~~for enabling~~ to enable the agent software to communicate over the Internet with an e-commerce website.

7. (Withdrawn) A method for allowing a seller of items to gather data from e-commerce websites in order to optimize the sale of similar items, comprising the following steps:

a. accepting a detailed description from said seller about said items for sale,

b. examining a database for information about similar items that have previously sold at e-commerce websites,

c. determining that said database contains information about said similar items and extracting said information,

d. presenting said information to said seller.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7 including: a. querying said user for a format in which said information is to be presented and b. presenting said information in accordance with said format.

9. (Withdrawn) A method for allowing a seller of items to gather data from e-commerce websites in order to optimize the sale of similar items, comprising the following steps:

a. accepting a detailed description from said seller about said items for sale,

b. examining a database for information about similar items that have previously sold at e-commerce websites,

c. determining that said database does not contain information about said similar items,

d. starting agent software to search e-commerce websites to gather information about said similar items that have previously been sold at said e-commerce websites, and

e. storing said information that has been gathered by said agent software into said database.

10. (Withdrawn) A method for updating a database with data from e-commerce websites about the sale of various items, comprising the following steps:

a. starting agent software at regular intervals to search e-commerce

websites to gather information about said various items that have previously been sold at said e-commerce websites and

b. storing said information that has been gathered by said agent software into a database.

11. (Withdrawn) A method for updating a database with data from e-commerce websites about the sale of various items, comprising the following steps:

a. providing a detailed description of an item,

b. providing a set of search parameters,

c. providing a list of e-commerce sites,

d. searching said list of e-commerce sites according to said search parameters,

e. retrieving information from said e-commerce sites, using said search parameters and said detailed description, about said item, and

f. storing said information into a database.